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VCOS Board Meeting Minutes Pittsburgh/Southpointe PA March 7-8, 2025

Participants:

VCOS Board Members Present:

Chief Rich Cowger, Chair
Chief Al Yancey, Vice Chair
Chief Fred Windisch, Secretary/Treasurer
Chief Shawn Stokes, Director at Large
Chief Jordan Cramer, Director at Large
Chief Jason Caughey, Director at Large
Chief Kevin Cooney, Director at Large
Chief Tim Sendelbach, Director at Large

VCOS Board Members Not Present:

Chief Jason Catrambone, International Director
Chief Spencer Cheatham, Director at Large

IAFC Guests/Staff:

Representative Mike Bost (remote)
Chief John Buckman, Education Coordinator
Kevin McGee, Staff Liaison
Mikel Robinson, Staff Support Contractor
Ken LaSala, Government Relations, and Policy Director (remote)
Scott Beecher, Ward Deisel
Dan Seidberg, IamResponding
Ed Mann, Provident Insurance
Joe Giorgi, VFIS
Robi King, Vector Solutions
Matt Shrouts, Vector Solutions
Darren D'Ippolito, Provident Insurance

Call to Order

Chief Rich Cowger called the meeting to order March 7, 2025 at 08:31 hrs ET.

Chief Cowger held a moment of silence for David Michaels, VFIS who succumbed to his courageous battle with cancer on October 11, 2024.

Approval of February 11, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Chief Rich Cowger, Chair

MOTION: March 7, 2025-01

Motion made and seconded to approve the February 11, 2025 Board meeting minutes.

Motion carried.

Caughey/Stokes

Chair Report

Chief Rich Cowger

Chief Cowger forwarded the Data Ribbon Report for final edits and for the IAFC Boards approval.

Chief Cowger reiterated that the next in-person Board meeting will be hosted by Chief Catrambone in the Houston, TX on May 16-17, 2025. Plan to arrive Thursday May 17th using IAH Airport.

Conversation with Congressman Mike Bost

Congressman Mike Bost, Illinois 12th District joined the meeting remotely from his district to address prepared questions. Congressman Bost addressed diesel exhaust EPA regulations, Wildfire IMT staffing. Congressman Bost requested to notify his office of any delays in receiving SAFER or FIRE Act grant reimbursements.

Vice Chair Report

Chief Al Yancey

Chief Yancey informed the Board that the Health & Wellness Committee have a scheduled meeting in April. He mentioned that Chief Hardwick wrote an article on cancer in the fire service. A discussion was started on cancer marker screenings as a cancer prevention strategy.

Legislative Report

Ken LaSala

Mr. LaSala provided a legislative update report on Congress and the Administration.

Secretary Treasurer Report

Chief Fred Windisch

Chief Windisch presented the Treasurer's report providing a PowerPoint overview of the status of the general fund, Pierce fund and SITS account.

Strategic Plan Work Session

Facilitated by Chief Al Yancey

Chief Yancey reviewed the 2024 strategic section initiatives and accomplishments and the Board SWOT analysis survey results.

Resulting from work session discussions, 2025 strategic initiatives will focus on Education, Leadership and Legislative efforts.

A committee for education, consulting and consolidation framework was established to be led by Chief Caughey and Chief Sendelbach.

Education Report

Chief John Buckman III

There will be no on-site registration at Symposium in the Sun (SITS) and that will be made clear in SITS marketing material and website. SITS is not staffed to accommodate, and the venue gets sold out. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Chief Buckman will coordinate with Mikel Robinson to conduct a member education needs survey.

The Board is organizing a workgroup to offer coaching to fire chiefs on department consolidation to be led by Chief Sendelbach and Chief Caughey for a report back within 120 days.

A discussion was conducted to discuss possible entertainment options for Symposium in the Sun.

MOTION: March 7, 2025-02

Motion made and seconded that no funds shall be used for entertainment at Symposium in the Sun. Motion carried.

Sendelbach/Stokes

Partnership Update

The partners each gave a brief update and emphasized their willingness to continue to support the section and its programs.

Election Committee

Chief Kevin Cooney

Chief Cooney stated that Chief Jim Cook and Chief Brian Biggs have seven applications for the three open 2025 at-large director positions. The nomination period closes on March 10 and the election committee will meet immediately after the close date to assure qualified candidates will be placed on the VCOS ballot.

Recess at 4:30 PM

March 8, 2025

Critical Thinking Academy

The Board attended a portion of the Critical Thinking Academy.

Call to Order

Chief Cowger called the meeting back to order at 10:00 am

Sponsorship and Partnerships Committee Report

Chief Caughey

Discussion on sponsorship and legacy partnerships.

MOTION: March 8, 2025-1

Motion made and seconded to approve the nomenclature of Foundation Partners for the five partners to include Provident, Ward Diesel, IamResponding, VFIS and Pierce. Motion carried.

Yancey/Cooney

A policy will be prepared to institutionalize the motion with a proposal presented at the May 2025 meeting.

Report Workforce Solutions

Chief Cramer

Chief Cramer informed the Board that progress on Workforce Solutions is on hold due to the federal funding issues that are now being addressed.

Support Position Report

Mikel Robinson

Ms. Robinson will work on producing marketing materials for the VCOS. Consideration will be assessed for a members' only page.

Ms. Robinson will coordinate with IAFC Communications and Marketing staff to get the Awards and Scholarships announcement distributed.

Ms. Robinson will find Newsletter circulation data.

Staff Liaison Report

Kevin McGee

IAFC staff is preparing the RFP for the Webinar provider contract that includes input

from Chief John Buckman III.

Old Business

After discussion of scheduling conflicts, the Board settled on May 15, 16, 17 in the Houston TX area for the Spring in-person Board meeting. Chief Catrambone and Chief Windisch will coordinate the meeting location.

NCFC Summit to be held in Salt Lake City (UT) June 20-21. VCOS will have booth space at the Summit.

MOTION: March 8, 2025-02

Motion made and seconded to approve two Board members to attend the NVFC Summit in Salt Lake City (UT). Motion carried.

Stokes/Cramer

New Business

MOTION: March 8, 2025-03

Motion made and seconded to endorse Chief Ernie Malone for IAFC 2nd Vice President. Motion carried.

Windisch/Catrambone

Chief Cooney provided an update on the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. Chief Cooney encouraged sending direct donations to the NFFF and suggested a donation on the SITS registration or confirmation email. He would like to promote the virtual 9-11 stair climb event. The NFFF is interested to do the bourbon tasting fund raiser again at SITS.

The meeting adjourned at 1307 hrs ET.

Minutes submitted by:

Mr. Kevin McGee
VCOS Staff Liaison

Fire Chief Fred Windisch
Secretary/Treasurer

Chief Rich Cowger
Chair

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